

Army survives Navy comeback effort

Posted: November 18, 2006



(photo by David Allen)

By Jason Adkins

Provo, UT – #4-ranked Army survived a late charge by #6 Navy to win the 5th annual Army-Navy Rugby Classic 28-16 in Annapolis, MD, on Saturday night.

"The men played well," Army head coach Rich Pohlidal said to American Rugby News. "The players had the leadership on the field to make the right decisions." Pohlidal added that he was impressed by Navy's play, especially in coming back and credited Navy's coaching staff for the job they do in working with the Midshipmen.

The Black Knights jumped out to a 16-0 lead in the first half with two tries, one from outside center Rob Small with a long run in the middle of the pitch, and the second coming off of loose play and flanker Jay Berger was credited with the second score. Fullback Brendan McCarthy added two penalty kicks for an additional six points. The Midshipmen only put up three points in the first half, with winger J. Wesley Vandorn kicking over a penalty.

Army did not let up to start the second half as hooker Tony Fatula charged down a Navy kick and scored a try to increase the lead to 21-3 early in the second half. The Black Knights were on the defensive for 10 minutes after their skipper, flyhalf Andrew Locke, was sin-binned. Navy took advantage of the being a man up and inside center Jordan Fogle scored on a outside run and the Army lead was cut to 21-8.

One last try by Army sealed the match, but the Midshipmen came back late in the second half with two tries to make the match interesting at the end. Navy lock Blake Lindsay scored a brace of tries and they were knocking on the door for another, but comeback fell short in the end.

"We had limited possession," Navy head coach Mike Flanagan told ARN. "We need to play 80 minutes of on-the-hip rugby."

Out west in Glendale, AZ, the National U19 team defeated Arizona State 32-24 in the first of two matches in the Grand Canyon State scheduled this weekend. "We played them admirably," ASU coach Gary Lane said. "It was quite a match." The U19 squad next plays the University of Arizona tomorrow in Tucson, AZ.

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